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# FOREIGN POLICY REPORTS

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## Post-War Politics in Greece

BY NICHOLAS S. KALTCHAS

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# Post-War Politics in Greece

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*with the aid of the Research Staff of the Foreign Policy Association*

[This report was written before General Metaxas' coup of August 5, 1936. It deals mainly with the events leading up to, and immediately following, the restoration of the monarchy; and it touches only briefly on the Metaxas dictatorship. Ed.]

## I. FROM REPUBLIC TO MONARCHY

THE restoration of George II to the throne of Greece in November 1935 closed a crowded chapter of Greek history which began more than twenty years ago when his father, King Constantine, opposed Premier Venizelos' plans of intervention in the World War on the side of the Allied powers. The first phase of the ensuing struggle included the establishment of an insurgent Venizelist government in Salonica, the expulsion of the King by the Allies, his replacement by his second son, Alexander, and the triumph of Venizelos' interventionist policy. The second phase terminated with the general election of November 1920 when, despite the victorious outcome of the war and the rich rewards of the Treaty of Sèvres, Venizelos was decisively defeated and, by an overwhelming plebiscitary vote, King Constantine was restored to the throne vacated by Alexander's sudden death. A third and decisive landmark was reached in September 1922, when the prosecution of the campaign in Anatolia even after the withdrawal of Allied support led to the defeat of the Greek army, the establishment of the Plastiras military dictatorship, the King's definitive abdication and banishment and the influx of over a million refugees. Their pronounced Venizelist and anti-monarchist sympathies enabled the Republicans to cut short the reign of George II, proclaim the Republic by the vote of a partisan National Assembly and ratify this action by the plebiscite of April 13, 1924.

Thus the Greek monarchy, like the Austro-Hungarian, the Prusso-German, the Russian and the Ottoman, may be regarded as a victim of the war and its revolutionary aftermath. But, while in other countries where the monarchical régime

succumbed to defeat and revolution the reaction against democracy and republicanism has taken the form of essentially anti-monarchical dictatorships, the revolutionary cycle in Greece led to the restoration of the monarchy with the constitutional impress which it bore before the Constantine-Venizelos conflict. This report, by analyzing the events which led to the restoration, seeks to explain the deviation of Greece from the apparently normal post-war pattern of European politics. In the second place, it will attempt to evaluate the part played by international factors in Greek politics, and to indicate the changes which have taken place in the traditional foreign policy of Greece under the Republic.

## VENIZELOS AND THE REPUBLIC

The Greek Republic was not grounded in widespread popular opposition to the monarchy as an institution. It emerged from a military disaster which marked the end of a century of irredentist expansionism, and for which King Constantine was held responsible by a large part of the defeated army and the Greek people. Because of its origins, the Republic became identified with the statesman who since 1915 had been the King's foremost antagonist. Yet Venizelos had never been a doctrinaire Republican. His opposition to Prince George, who was High Commissioner of Crete from 1898 to 1906, did not make him an enemy of the Glücksburg dynasty. When he left Crete in 1910 to assume the Greek Premiership, he made it unmistakably clear that he regarded constitutional monarchy as the ideal form of government for Greece; and he adhered to this conviction despite his bitter personal hostility to King Constantine. In 1923, while he represented defeated Greece at the Lausanne Conference, he remonstrated with the revolutionary government for banishing King Constantine's successor. But when he recognized, during his brief Premiership early in 1924, that the Republic might conceivably be a

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way out of the revolutionary situation created by the Asia Minor disaster, he urged that the issue be decided by a plebiscite rather than by a decree of a so-called National Assembly in the election of which the royalists had not participated. Although his advice was rejected and the plebiscite of April 13, 1924 was merely confirmatory, the Republican majority of 758,762 was overwhelmingly composed of his followers, just as the 323,424 votes cast for the monarchy belonged to the normally anti-Venizelist section of the country. Precisely because to the Republican rank and file—possibly more than one half of the Greek people—the Republic was synonymous with Venizelos, it did not command the allegiance of the other half, whose loyalty to King Constantine's memory was as intense as their hostility to the Cretan statesman.

Hence the retirement of Venizelos from active politics was desired both by his enemies and by the more independent of his former lieutenants, who were anxious to de-personalize the Republican régime in order to make it acceptable to the royalist section of the Greek people. The coalition government of party leaders under the Premiership of M. Zaïmis, which inaugurated the return to parliamentarism after the short-lived dictatorship of General Pangalos in September 1926, made considerable progress in that direction and brought the revolutionary period to a close by completing the drafting of the Republican constitution in June 1927. But like most coalitions, it proved an increasingly cumbersome instrument of government and was already in process of disintegration when Venizelos, after an absence of four years, suddenly returned to active politics and resumed the leadership of the Liberal party. Appointed to the Premiership by President Koundouriotis on July 3, 1928, he dissolved the Chamber of Deputies, abolished proportional representation by Presidential decree and held a general election on August 19, which secured for him a majority over all other parties and enabled him to govern during four turbulent years whose balance sheet showed considerable constructive achievement.

The re-emergence of Venizelos not only exasperated the royalists and slackened the pace of adherence to the Republic, but also alienated MM. Kaphandaris and Papanastassiou, his former lieutenants, and marked the beginning of the rift with General George Kondylis which was to grow into irreconcilable enmity. These Republican leaders naturally resented their relegation to a secondary rôle and the high-handed change of the electoral law which reduced their groups in the Chamber to

virtual impotence. The Republican front was thus broken; and during the four years of Venizelos' Premiership the royalists, who combated him not only as head of the government, but as the embodiment of the Republican régime, received aid and comfort from his former followers, who were much more Republican than himself. The Republic was thus reduced once more to exclusive dependence on the Liberal party and its leader, and the situation became the more precarious because the deflationary and restrictive measures necessitated by the repercussions of Britain's abandonment of the gold standard undermined the Premier's popularity and made renewal of his mandate for a second four-year term extremely problematical.<sup>1</sup>

Fears that Venizelos' defeat might endanger the Republic were dispelled when Tsaldaris, the leader of the traditionally royalist Populist party, promised unequivocally to recognize the régime and to conduct his government within its framework. In the general election of September 25, 1932 which followed this declaration, the Liberal party secured 102 seats against 96 seats for the Populist party (Tsaldaris); 15 for the Progressives (Kaphandaris); 11 for the Farmer-Labor party (Papanastassiou); 6 for the Agrarian (Mylonas) and 6 for the National Radical party (Kondylis). Protracted negotiations having failed to produce a coalition government, Tsaldaris, who had in the meantime reiterated his pledge of loyalty to the Republic, formed on November 5, 1932 what was in effect a minority government which Venizelos agreed to tolerate. The truce lasted only until January 13, 1933, when Venizelos attacked the government's financial policy and compelled Tsaldaris to resign and throw off his irksome tutelage. Venizelos resumed the Premiership, dissolved the Chamber on the ground that its composition precluded the formation of a strong government, and decreed what was to prove a fateful general election.

The outcome of this election, held on March 5, 1933, showed that Venizelos had misread the trend of public sentiment as disastrously as in November 1920. His party's strength was reduced from 102 to 96 members while the Populist party secured 135 seats, a clear majority in a total membership of 248. On the assumption that all the votes cast for the Populist party and for General John Metaxas' Free Opinion party were royalist, the royalist vote aggregated 40.33 per cent of a total

1. For a discussion of the measures taken by Greece to meet the situation created by England's abandonment of the gold standard, cf. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, 1931 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 122.

poll of 1,141,331.<sup>2</sup> But in view of Tsaldaris' reiterated pledges of loyalty to the Republic, the increment of the royalist poll was conceivably derived from normally Republican votes and might indicate dissatisfaction with four years of Venizelist rule and several months of tortuous maneuvering, rather than a sudden recrudescence of royalist sentiment.

#### THE PLASTIRAS COUP, 1933, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

This view, which prevailed among Republican politicians, was not shared by the faction of Republican soldiers led by General Nicholas Plastiras. His attempt at a military coup on March 5-6 was a dismal failure and was liquidated by a military directorate under General Othoneos, which made way four days later for a parliamentary government headed by Tsaldaris. But this abortive resort to illegality in behalf of the Republic radically altered the complexion of Greek politics. Although aimed at Tsaldaris and designed to deprive him of the fruits of his electoral victory, the coup occurred while Venizelos was still in power, was led by his most faithful henchman and hence exposed him to the charge of weakness for failing to forestall it or, worse, the suspicion of connivance. Besides discrediting the foremost Republican leader, the re-emergence of General Plastiras, the head of the revolutionary government of September 1922, revived passions which had been largely appeased by the orderly functioning of the Republican régime, and played into the hands of the irreconcilable royalists. It also drove Plastiras' old enemy, General Kondylis, the leader of the rival faction of Republican soldiers, definitively into the anti-Venizelist camp. By making Kondylis Minister of War and Admiral Hadjikyriacos, another anti-Venizelist Republican, Minister of the Navy, Tsaldaris offered tangible proof of his claim that his government, although anti-Venizelist, had no designs against the Republic.

The consequences of Plastiras' abortive coup dogged Tsaldaris' Premiership and largely determined the course of Greek politics during the next two years. A motion to impeach Venizelos on the ground of complicity with the coup was made by General Metaxas in the Chamber of Deputies. While the storm it provoked was at its height, an attempt was made on the life of Venizelos, on June 6, 1933, which resulted in the death of his bodyguard and the wounding of his wife. This crime brought about the reconciliation of Venizelos

with his former lieutenants, the reconstruction of a united Republican front, and the revival of the irrepressible conflict over the régime. On July 2 the reunited Republicans defeated the government's attempt to increase its majority by capturing the twenty Republican seats of Salonica through a by-election of questionable legality. At the same time, the Opposition's charges that influential members of the Populist party were implicated in the attempt on Venizelos' life and its insistence on a fearless inquiry and a speedy trial, engendered intense bitterness and made the adjustments and compromises necessitated by the government's lack of a majority in the Senate increasingly difficult.

This was particularly the case with two major government measures: a new electoral bill establishing the majority system of election by single member constituencies, and designed, according to the Opposition, to alter the balance of power by gerrymandering normally Republican constituencies; and a bill providing for radical revision of the *cadres* of the Army, Navy and Air Force. The Republican Opposition claimed that both of these measures were fraught with menace for the régime. Their rejection by the Senate, which had retained its Venizelist majority owing to its peculiar composition,<sup>3</sup> provoked a violent outcry among the ministerialists against the alleged obstruction of democratic government by that body. The ministerial campaign for abolition of the Senate produced, in turn, Opposition charges that this intended violation of the constitution was designed to remove the most formidable obstacle to the overthrow of the Republic. When the bills were finally passed by the Chamber over the Senate's veto, President Zaïmis refused to heed Republican exhortations to exercise a veto power he did not possess; and this refusal aroused in certain Republican quarters opposition to his reelection and revived agitation in favor of Venizelos' candidacy. His intimation that he might accept the Presidency if it were endowed with powers similar to those of its American counterpart<sup>4</sup> not only strengthened the government's determination to oppose his candidacy, but aroused misgivings among those Republicans who feared that the assumption of the highest office in the country by the strongest personality in Greek politics would

2. This compared with 35.39 per cent of 1,171,637 in November 1932; 33.03 per cent of 1,017,281 in August 1928; and 39.87 per cent of 921,226 in September 1926.

3. 92 members of the Senate were elected for 9 years and renewed by one-third every 3 years; 18 were elected by professional groups for 3 years; and 10 were elected by both chambers in joint session for the duration of the term of the Chamber of Deputies.

4. Letter to *Eleftheron Vima* (Athens), September 22, 1934, quoted in *The Times* (London), September 23, 1934.

convert the parliamentary into a presidential Republic. The government's promise to replace the pending electoral bill with one more acceptable to the Opposition induced seventeen Senators to transfer their votes to President Zaïmis, who was accordingly reelected on October 19, 1934 for a five-year term in a joint session of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, by 197 votes out of the total 365, with 112 blank ballots presumably cast by the Republicans.<sup>5</sup>

#### REVOLT OF MARCH 1, 1935

The relaxation of political tension which followed Zaïmis' re-election and the return of the Republican Opposition to the Chamber was terminated by the opening of the long-deferred trial of the persons who were accused of the attempt on Venizelos' life. Before the trial could be completed, public attention was diverted from it by the sudden outbreak, on March 1, 1935, of a large-scale mutiny of the armed forces, which produced violent political repercussions. The revolt was organized by Republican officers who had either been placed on the retired list since the Plastiras coup or were determined to avert a similar fate, which they felt to be imminent. Convinced that their shelving was part of the government's plan to de-republicanize the armed forces and thus prepare the way for the restoration of the monarchy, these officers identified their professional interests with the Republican cause; and far from regarding themselves as rebels, they felt that they were the true defenders of the Republic against the designs of a crypto-royalist administration.

The insurgents' appeal to Venizelos to assume the political leadership of the movement confronted him with a fateful choice. By his own admission, he had known of the preparations of the naval officers to seize the fleet, and he had already withdrawn his objections to such action in December 1934, but had advised his followers to wait "until they [the government] attempt to restore the monarchy."<sup>6</sup> It must have been this commitment, without which the revolt might conceivably not have broken out, rather than, as he claimed, his indignation at the premature suspension of the constitution by the government, which compelled him to throw in his lot with the insurgents. The situation created by this decision gave the revolt a striking resemblance to the "National Defense" movement organized by Venizelos in 1916 to

compel King Constantine to abandon his policy of neutrality. But this resemblance was superficial. Whereas in 1916 Venizelos' interventionist stand on the war had evoked passionate mass support and he was able to operate from Salonica under the protection, although with only the reluctant support, of the Allies, he was now faced by a strong government and a hostile nation. For even those who had followed him blindly for years were bewildered and antagonized by his latest move and substantially agreed with the government's description of the revolt as "an attempt made against the legal State by a minority of dissatisfied officers."<sup>7</sup> But the characterization of the insurgents as "friends of the Opposition" was not quite accurate, for not only did all the Republican leaders of any prominence deplore and denounce the revolt, but even those Republicans who were convinced that the government was heading toward the restoration of the monarchy did not believe that the rebellion of the armed forces was the best method of averting that danger.<sup>8</sup> Thus Venizelos, who was a Cretan revolutionary in his twenties, exposed himself to the charge of "ending his career as he began,"<sup>9</sup> but with much more dubious justification. Because he had failed to clarify the issue and prepare public opinion for his action, he found himself at the head of a military and naval mutiny which, completely lacking popular support, speedily collapsed before the superior forces of the government.

The revolt of March 1935 was a repetition on a much larger scale of the Plastiras coup of March 1933. That first attempt to nullify by force the anti-Venizelist electoral victory precipitated an anti-Republican campaign and provoked a series of measures which within two years drove their more immediate victims to a second attempt to "save" the Republic. The failure of this second resort to illegality accelerated the process it was intended to check and created a revolutionary situation which culminated, within the short space of eight months, in the very event the insurgents were determined to avert—the restoration of the monarchy.

#### STEPS TOWARD RESTORATION OF MONARCHY

The immediate political problem of the anti-Venizelist parties, which were now left in complete possession of the field, was how best to capi-

5. *The Times*, October 15, 20, 1934.

6. Interview with the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, June 21, 28, 1935.

7. Quoted by Venizelos in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, June 21, 1935.

8. *Kathimerini* and *Proia* (Athens), March 2, 3, 1935. *Atlantis* (New York), March 5, 7, 30, 1935.

9. *The Times*, editorial, March 9, 1935.

talize the anti-Venizelist sentiment produced by the collapse of the revolt. General Metaxas, who had joined the government as Minister-without-portfolio at the outbreak of the revolt, urged that, since it was led by Venizelos and was organized in defense of the Republic, the logical consequence of its failure should be the political extirpation of Venizelism and restoration of the monarchy. Premier Tsaldaris and General Kondylis, whose prestige had been immensely strengthened by the suppression of the revolt, favored, at first, a policy of greater leniency toward the insurgents and caution on the issue of the régime. Owing to this divergence of views, General Metaxas resigned from the government, placed himself at the head of the restorationists and, by holding over Tsaldaris' head the threat of disruption of the Populist party, goaded him into a policy which linked the liquidation of the revolt with the fate of the Republic.

This policy was formulated in three constituent acts submitted to the Chamber when it reassembled on March 29, with only 40 Republicans present, and passed on April 1. The first of these acts, "taking cognizance of the expressed will of the Greek people to consolidate the Republican régime," decreed the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies and the abolition of the Senate, the appointment of a committee to draft a new Republican constitution, and the ratification of this document by the new Chamber. The second constituent act suspended the permanency of judges and public prosecutors in order to enable the government to purge the judiciary; and the third, with the same end in view, suspended the permanency of civil servants.<sup>10</sup> Thus, while the government moved, on the one hand, to revise the constitution with the professed aim of strengthening the Republic, through the operation of the second and third constituent acts it deprived the régime of its essential foundations. For the retirement of 1,200 officers and thousands of civil servants—from diplomats, university professors and members of the Council of State to elementary school teachers and justices of the peace<sup>11</sup>—created in effect an "anti-Venizelist State" and placed the Republic in the keeping of its enemies.<sup>12</sup>

10. *Kathimerini*, *Proia*, *The Times*, April 2, 1935.

11. *The Times*, November 4, 1935.

12. The pressure of the irreconcilables was strikingly reflected in the treatment of the insurgents. The leaders of the revolt, including Venizelos and Plastiras, were sentenced to death *in absentia*; and three essentially retaliatory death sentences were carried out. On the other hand, all the Republican leaders who had not fled were acquitted except M. Gonatas, president of the Senate, who received a prison sentence of five years.

The influence of the royalist die-hards was exerted most effectively during the campaign for the election of a new National Assembly. The first constituent act of April 1, although it violated the constitution by abolishing the Senate, expressly stated that the contemplated constitutional revision was designed to strengthen the Republican régime. Yet this unequivocal declaration did not close the issue, for the government could not afford to hand over to General Metaxas the exclusive championship of the monarchist cause. Hence, in the course of the campaign not only Tsaldaris, but also Kondylis, whose presence in the government both before and after March 1935 had been regarded as guaranteeing the safety of the Republic, repeatedly promised that in case a majority of the National Assembly favored a change of régime, provision for a plebiscite would be made by the government.<sup>13-14</sup>

Although the issue of the régime was thus clearly raised both by the government and by General Metaxas, the Republican leaders urged their followers to abstain from the general election of June 9, claiming that the continuance of martial law, press censorship and other repressive measures made free elections impossible.<sup>15</sup> Hence the election narrowed down to a contest between the Tsaldaris-Kondylis coalition, which obtained a popular vote of 671,925 out of a total of 1,074,479 and 287 seats in the Chamber out of a total of 300; and General Metaxas' "Royalist Union," which secured 147,245 votes, with only 7 seats in the Chamber.<sup>16</sup>

The outcome of the election was hailed by all the Republican leaders as a "resounding repudiation" and "the definitive burial of the monarchy." General Metaxas, on the other hand, claimed that his party's poor showing was due to the fact that the bulk of royalist voters had been coerced into voting for government candidates and that the huge government majority was therefore predominantly royalist. He accordingly called upon Tsaldaris to dispense with the formality of a plebiscite and proceed to restore the monarchy by a "sovereign act" of the National Assembly, "in accordance with a mandate it had just received from the Greek people."<sup>17</sup>

13-14. Campaign speeches of April 26 and May 19, 1935, *The Times*, April 27, May 31, 1935.

15. A. Mihalacopoulos in *Eleftheron Vima*, June 5, 1935.

16. The rest of the poll was distributed among the Communists (86,674) and the anti-Venizelist Republicans, led by Philip Dragoumis (70,719), with 47,714 blank ballots. Official returns, *Eleftheron Vima*, June 11, 1935.

17. Statements by Republican leaders and by General Metaxas, *Eleftheron Vima*, June 11, 1935.

Tsaldaris was now faced with a difficult choice. Had he been resolutely determined to defend the Republic, he could have found in his triumph over Metaxas ample warrant for interpreting the election as a Republican victory and declaring the issue of the régime closed. This, however, would have driven the militantly royalist elements of his own party to join either Metaxas or Kondylis, who had already made a determined bid for royalist support by announcing in unequivocal terms his conversion to the monarchy.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, should Tsaldaris adopt General Metaxas' suggestion, rule out the plebiscite as redundant and restore the monarchy by decree of the National Assembly, he would be violating the palpable verdict of the election. The Premier attempted to escape from this dilemma by proposing a plebiscite, a course which both he and General Kondylis had considered during the campaign only in the event of a widespread popular demand for restoration.<sup>19</sup> On July 9 he submitted to the National Assembly a resolution which provided for a plebiscite, to be held before November 15, to decide between the maintenance of the parliamentary Republic and the restoration of "constitutional monarchy under a system of parliamentary government"; and decreed, in the event of a verdict favorable to the monarchy, the return of the Glücksburg dynasty "in the recognized male line of succession."<sup>20</sup>

The resolution was passed by a comfortable majority after an unexpectedly spirited debate which, in effect, inaugurated an anti-Venizelist campaign in defense of the Republic. The most spectacular aspect of this campaign was the defection from the monarchist ranks of prominent men belonging to the younger generation of anti-Venizelists, whose family antecedents should have made them bitterly hostile to the Republican régime.<sup>21</sup> These conversions were symptomatic of a widespread popular movement on behalf of the Republic. In the course of the summer, a mounting volume of protest against the government's policy

and expressions of devotion to the régime came from many quarters—professional and business groups, organized labor, even the traditionally royalist peasantry, and above all "from the intellectual and discerning classes of society."<sup>22</sup> Fear that this mobilization of Republican sentiment might jeopardize the outcome of the plebiscite impelled the militant restorationists among Tsaldaris' followers to turn to General Kondylis as the ideal leader for a "dynamic" settlement of the issue. This alliance between the energetic ex-Republican and the ultra-royalist politicians and soldiers was cemented while the Premier was taking his annual cure in Germany. Utilizing to the full his position as Minister of War as well as Acting Premier, General Kondylis made the necessary military preparations for a preliminary coup designed to force the Premier to abandon his neutrality. When General Panayotakos, commander of the Athens garrison, attempted to checkmate these plans on the very day of Tsaldaris' return, General Kondylis accused him of insubordination and tendered his resignation. The Premier missed his last opportunity to rid himself of his dangerous associate. In order to induce the War Minister to withdraw his resignation, he removed General Panayotakos from the command of the Athens garrison, thus yielding control of that crucial position to the restorationists, and on September 11 he followed, after three months' delay, in General Kondylis' footsteps by announcing his adherence to the monarchy. This surrender cost him the support of the Republicans without winning over the royalist die-hards, who still differed with him on the all-important question of procedure. For although finally compelled to repudiate the Republic, Tsaldaris clung steadfastly to the terms of the decree of July 9 which provided for the settlement of the question by a plebiscite. His position with respect to the restoration of the monarchy was, in other words, the same as that of Venizelos early in 1924 with regard to its abolition. The ultra-royalists, on the other hand, like General Kondylis and the other Republican extremists in 1924, insisted on abolition of the Republic by decree of the National Assembly, to be followed by a confirmatory plebiscite.

18. Interview with the Avala News Agency, *Eleftheron Vima*, June 21, 1935.

19. Cf. p. 150.

20. *Eleftheron Vima*, July 9, 1935.

21. These eleventh-hour converts included Professor P. Kanellopoulos of the University of Athens, a nephew of D. Gounaris, the founder of the Populist party and a victim of "revolutionary justice" in November 1922; M. A. Stratos, whose father, Nicholas Stratos, shared the same fate, and who resigned his seat in the Chamber because he felt that he had been elected under the erroneous impression that he was a monarchist; and M. P. Dragoumis, whose brother, Ion Dragoumis, the foremost intellectual leader of anti-Venizelism, was a victim of police brutality during the World War.

#### TSALDARIS OUSTED BY KONDYLIS

It was on this issue that Tsaldaris fought his last battle and made his final surrender. Successive dismissals and transfers, which had been accelerated since the revolt of March 1935, had removed not

22. *Hestia* (Athens), quoted in *The Times*, September 6, 1935.

only Republican, but even moderate royalist officers from the fighting services, and the way had thus been prepared for a successful royalist coup. On October 10 a deputation of officers consisting of General Papagos, commander of the Athens garrison, Rear Admiral Economou, and Colonel Repas, commander of the air corps, confronted Tsaldaris with the alternative of capitulation to their demand for immediate restoration or resignation. The Premier resigned under protest. General Kondylis immediately assumed the Premiership, convoked the National Assembly and submitted a series of resolutions which decreed abolition of the régime of "uncrowned democracy" (i.e., the Republic), holding of a plebiscite on November 3, the appointment of the Premier as Regent, and restoration of the constitution of 1911 pending the constitutional revision necessitated by these changes.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the relative one-sidedness of the Assembly, due to the abstention of the Republican Opposition from the general election of June 9, General Kondylis was unable to muster a majority for these decrees. They were passed on the same day by what was, in effect, a rump parliament, consisting of a minority of about 100, the majority having followed Tsaldaris, who withdrew after a speech of protest. The Premier-Regent then called on President Zaïmis to announce that his office had ceased to exist, and on October 11 M. Simopoulos, the Greek Minister in London, waited on the King to notify him of his restoration.<sup>24</sup>

The new government proceeded to organize the plebiscite with a view to removing all danger of a verdict favorable to the Republic.<sup>25</sup> But though the government's thoroughness made an affirmative vote a foregone conclusion, the outcome of the plebiscite was startling. The total poll of 1,727,714<sup>26</sup> exceeded by nearly half a million the average of the elections held during the preceding eleven years. Assuming that, despite the exhortations of Republican leaders, the abstention of Republican voters was negligible, and that the vote of the armed forces accounted for a considerable part of the increment, these figures reveal a degree of coercive and repressive control unprecedented in Greek politics. This impression is heightened by a comparison of the million and a half votes cast for the monarchy with the 33,000 cast for the Republic, and by the fact that in Crete and western Thrace, strongholds of Venizelism and republicanism, the Republic re-

ceived respectively only 1,214 and 1,276 votes as against 50,655 and 72,723 for the monarchy.<sup>27</sup>

#### KING GEORGE ADOPTS CONSTITUTIONAL COURSE

Yet in the last analysis, there was an element of genuineness in the outcome of the plebiscite which eludes statistical tabulation. The very ominousness of the situation which made these figures possible was already producing a revulsion of feeling among Republicans which must have contributed materially to the huge size of the monarchist poll. The motive of this reversal was the hope that the restored monarchy would be both national and constitutional; that it would, in short, offer an escape from the factional dictatorship foisted on the Greek people by its restorers. In view of the notorious incompatibility of kingship with post-war dictatorship, the very completeness of General Kondylis' triumph spelled his ultimate defeat. For he now had to deal with a King, who, thanks largely to his exertions, had received an overwhelming popular endorsement, and was apparently determined to restore the unity of the nation and the rule of law which had been shattered in the process of achieving his restoration.

Both before and after the plebiscite the King had given increasingly clear indications of his intentions. He went out of his way to give Venizelos the necessary assurances through Greek and foreign intermediaries<sup>28</sup> and to invite the cooperation of the exiled and proscribed Republican leader towards a policy of reconciliation and appeasement. These advances, and the fear that continued Republican opposition might make the King the crowned head of the "anti-Venizelist State" which had restored him,<sup>29</sup> induced a radical change of front on the part of Venizelos. In a letter to M. Roupfos, one of his former ministers who had remained a monarchist, he prescribed for his followers an attitude of benevolent toleration towards the King, provided he granted a general amnesty and restored constitutional government and civil liberty.<sup>30</sup> These conditions were met by the King's promise to devote his energies to the welfare of "all his people . . . to forget the past," and "to secure

27. The exact figures were 1,491,992 for the monarchy against 32,454 for the Republic and 3,268 spoilt ballots. *The Times*, November 4, 1935.

28. One of the intermediaries seems to have been M. Laval, the French Premier, to whom the King communicated his intentions for transmission to Venizelos when he stopped in Paris on his way back to Greece. *The Times*, December 2, 1935.

29. *The Times*, December 5, 1935 and letter of Venizelos to the *National Herald* (New York), December 12, 1935.

30. *Eleftheron Vima*, November 16, December 4, 1935; *The Times*, November 29, 1935.

23. *Eleftheron Vima*, October 10, 11, 1935.

24. *The Times*, October 11, 1935.

25. George Weller, *New York Times*, November 2, 1935.

26. *The Times*, November 4, 1935.

equality and justice for all."<sup>31</sup> The popular response evoked by this promise and by Venizelos' endorsement impelled the other Republican leaders to follow his lead;<sup>32</sup> and the restored ruler resumed his reign with the increasingly enthusiastic support of those who had most vehemently opposed his restoration.

By the same token, he disappointed those who had brought it about. The first clash between Premier Kondylis and the King occurred over the fate of those who were connected with the revolt of March 1935. The King insisted on a general amnesty for all the civilian, and a general pardon for all the military, insurgents. The Premier and the majority of his anti-Venizelist Cabinet, however, contended that the amnesty should not be extended to Venizelos, Plastiras, and all the others who had been sentenced as leaders of the revolt.<sup>33</sup> This first test of strength between King and king-maker resulted in the King's favor. George II was not intimidated by demonstrations staged by the Premier's ultra-royalist supporters; he demanded and promptly received pledges of loyalty from General Papagos, commander of the Athens garrison; and above all, he had behind him a solid and growing body of both monarchist and Republican sentiment. General Kondylis was therefore compelled to resign, and on December 1 the King called to the Premiership Constantine Demerdjis, professor of civil law at the University of Athens, who at the head of a non-party government took the first steps towards liquidating the Kondylis dictatorship.

He began by "granting full amnesty to all the civilians and full pardon to all the officers and public functionaries who were sentenced for participation in the March revolt,"<sup>34</sup> and he made a promising start toward the abolition of the "anti-Venizelist State" by reinstating large numbers of civil servants, judges and university professors who had been deposed by the Tsaldaris and Kondylis governments.<sup>35</sup> The next important step in this process—the holding of free elections—was recommended to the King not only by the ex-Republicans, who were not represented in the Chamber of June 9, but also by Generals Kondylis and Metaxas, who hoped to increase their strength by a new election. The Populist party which dominated the Chamber

held, on the other hand, that as a constituent body the National Assembly was not subject to dissolution by royal decree and would dissolve itself only after it had framed a constitution for the restored monarchy.<sup>36</sup> The circulation of a round-robin signed by 166 deputies of the Populist party, calling on the Speaker to convoke the Chamber over the head of the government, brought matters to a climax. A royal decree, accompanied by an explanatory proclamation to the people, dissolved the Chamber, ordered a general election for January 26, 1936, "with the participation of all parties," and defined the task of the new parliament as "revisionist," i.e., confined to the amendment of the non-essential provisions of the monarchical constitution of 1911.<sup>37</sup>

The general election of January 26, 1936, which was conducted by the Demerdjis government with the utmost impartiality under a modified system of proportional representation, may be said to have terminated the revolutionary situation begun in March 1933, which brought about the restoration of the monarchy. And the Chamber which emerged from this election was by and large a replica of the Chamber returned by the equally free election of September 1926, which closed the revolutionary situation that attended the birth of the Republic. The most startling feature of the election was the complete recovery of the Liberal party, which secured 126 seats, and the strong showing of the Communists, who obtained 15 seats. On the other hand, the Populist party, the Liberal party's traditional rival, was definitely split. Its ultra-royalist right wing, under M. John Theotokis, combined with General Kondylis to form the "Radical Union," which won 60 seats, while Tsaldaris' following was reduced to 72 seats. The balance of the 300 seats was distributed among seven small groups.<sup>38</sup>

#### EMERGENCE OF GENERAL METAXAS

Precisely because the new Chamber reflected so faithfully all sections of opinion, the task of forming a parliamentary government proved extremely arduous. Since no party had obtained a clear majority, it was generally recognized that either an œcumenical (all-party) government or a coalition of the two major parties was indicated. The latter solution was urged by the leaders of the smaller parties except M. Theotokis, General Kondylis' ally, who pointedly recalled the fate of the 1928

36. Tsaldaris' speech to the Populist party caucus, *Eleftheron Vima*, December 16, 1935.

37. *The Times* and *Eleftheron Vima*, December 18, 1935.

38. Third and final balloting. *Eleftheron Vima*, February 23, 1936.

31. First Royal Proclamation, *Eleftheron Vima*, November 26, 1935.

32. Except M. Papanastassiou, who promised to operate within the framework of the régime without, however, recognizing it formally.

33. *Eleftheron Vima*, November 28, 1935.

34. Premier Demerdjis' statement to the press, *Eleftheron Vima*, December 1, 1935; *New York Times*, December 2, 1935.

35. *Eleftheron Vima*, January 26, 1936.

coalition at the hands of Venizelos, and asked for guarantees against his return to active politics.<sup>39</sup> The coalition plan was agreed to eagerly by Themistocles Sophoulis, Venizelos' successor as leader of the Liberal party, and somewhat more reluctantly by Tsaldaris, the Populist leader, who pointed out the difficulties of his position in the face of criticism from his anti-Venizelist following.<sup>40</sup> But after protracted negotiations, in the course of which both leaders made considerable concessions, it was found impossible to agree on the distribution of the three defense ministries and the allocation of the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>41</sup> Behind this disagreement was the profound divergence of the two camps on the all-important question of the reinstatement of the Venizelist and Republican officers who had been retired since the Plastiras coup of March 1933. M. Demerdjis, who, largely because of his lack of party affiliations, had already made an excellent beginning with his herculean task, was therefore asked to carry on; and he reconstructed his government on March 14 by appointing General Metaxas to the War Office and the vice-presidency of the Council. After M. Demerdjis' sudden death on April 13 and the failure of a second attempt to form a Liberal-Populist coalition,<sup>42</sup> General Metaxas succeeded to the Premiership. Although the leader of one of the smaller parliamentary groups, he appeared before the Chamber with a comprehensive program, the most important part of which was his promise to "restore internal peace and the rule of law"; and he pressed for immediate passage of a resolution adjourning parliament for five months and transferring its legislative functions to a permanent parliamentary commission of 40 members, on which all parties were to be proportionately represented. After a long debate, the Enabling Act was passed by 249 votes against 16, and M. Metaxas was authorized to govern under its terms until September 30, 1936.<sup>43</sup> But the situation underwent another change before the expiration of this time limit. On August 5, 1936, after three months of increasingly difficult collaboration with the parliamentary commission, the Premier invoked the threat of a general strike allegedly sponsored by Communists, declared a state of emergency pending the restoration of public order, and dissolved the Chamber without fixing a date for new elections.

39. Minutes of the Crown Council of February 13, 1936, *Eleftheron Vima*, February 15, 1936.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Eleftheron Vima*, February 22, 1936.

42. *Ibid.*, April 24, 1936.

43. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1936.

#### UNDERLYING FACTORS OF RESTORATION

With the restoration of constitutional monarchy, the general election of January 26, 1936, and the relative appeasement achieved under the Demerdjis and Metaxas governments, the revolutionary cycle begun in 1915 appeared to be drawing to a close. By an impressive coincidence which provided a fitting conclusion, the three leaders who epitomized this period—Venizelos, its dominant figure, Tsaldaris and Kondylis, the protagonists of its last phase—died within half a year after the plebiscite of November 3.<sup>44</sup> Evidence of a reorientation of Greek politics is seen in the following salient aspects:

1. *Elimination of the issue of the régime from politics.* The change in public sentiment since the plebiscite reveals that since 1915 the real struggle over the régime has been not between republic and monarchy, but between constitutional government and autocracy. The traditional attachment of the Greek people to constitutionalism has been the common origin of both the Republican and the monarchist movements which developed out of Venizelos' conflict with King Constantine over foreign policy. For just as republicanism began as a protest against King Constantine's attempt to substitute his will for that of parliament (1915-1916), royalism had its roots in the hostility aroused by Venizelos' resort to revolution (1916) and the arbitrariness of his semi-dictatorial war administration (1917-1920). And because in the course of the long struggle there developed on both sides militant groups which identified themselves with the state and were therefore hostile to liberty, the restored monarchy seems assured of stability and permanence provided that it gives the Greek people what they prize more than monarchy or republic—namely, constitutional government.

2. *Decline of the military factor in Greek politics.* Revolutions in modern Greece have been made, as a rule, in barracks rather than on barricades. But because the common democratic origin of officers, non-commissioned officers and men made them a representative cross-section of the nation, their periodic incursions into politics have reflected the popular sentiment of the time. Such was the case in 1843, when King Otho was compelled to grant a constitution; in 1862, when he was dethroned because of his inveterate tendency to violate it; and above all in 1909, when widespread popular discontent found expression in

44. General Kondylis died on January 31, Venizelos on March 18, Tsaldaris on May 17, and Premier Demerdjis on April 13, 1936.

the insurrection of the Military League (composed mostly of subaltern and non-commissioned officers), which compelled King George I and the politicians of the day to turn over the government of Greece to Venizelos.<sup>45</sup> Thus the dominant part played by the military since 1915 has been in conformity with the traditions of Greek politics. But the increasing bitterness of the long struggle, in conjunction with the exigencies of two wars, precipitated wholesale removals of officers on both sides. These two camps of "ins" and "outs" have been both the servants and the masters of rival politicians and the perpetrators of successive Republican and monarchist coups which culminated in the overthrow of the Republic. The so-called "military question"—the reinstatement of Republican officers cashiered after the coups of March 1933 and March 1935—has not yet been completely settled. But as a political issue it is gradually receding to the background, owing to the political realignment which is now in progress and to the emergence of more urgent national problems.

3. *Increasing concern of Greek politics with economic and social issues.* Symptomatic of this development was the agreement, signed on April 3, 1936, between the Liberal party and the Communist parliamentary party by which the Liberals agreed, in return for Communist assistance toward the election of M. Sophoulis to the presidency of the Chamber, to cooperate in "safeguarding popular liberties, securing amnesty for all political prisoners and providing for the needs of the working classes."<sup>46</sup> This cooperation has been strictly limited to the common interest of the two groups in the restoration of civil liberty; and the effort of the Communists to build up a permanent united front has so far met with little success, despite their new policy of nationalism (withdrawal of their support of the Macedonian independence movement) and legality (promise to pursue their aims by parliamentary methods).<sup>47</sup>

But the situation may be altered by the latest developments. The dissolution of parliament on such an eminently social issue as a general strike

is something novel in Greek politics and another striking symptom of the shift of emphasis which has taken place since the restoration of the monarchy. If the dissolution is not a temporary expedient, but presages an attempt on Premier Metaxas' part to govern without Parliament, it may conceivably hasten the consolidation of the forces interested in the maintenance of democratic and parliamentary government. But such a united front must avoid all appearance of being dominated by the Communists, in order not to alienate the middle and professional classes, which have shown remarkable sympathy for the working class in recent industrial conflicts and particularly during the sanguinary strike of tobacco workers which occurred last May in Salonica.

Despite these unmistakable symptoms of normality, the parliamentary system had not been completely restored even before Premier Metaxas' recent coup. The Chamber elected on January 26 showed itself incapable of producing a government and was compelled to delegate its functions to a commission and to turn to a Premier who was the leader of one of its smallest groups and who owed his position more to the confidence of the Crown than to the more or less reluctant support of parliament. The parliamentary leaders resented this anomalous position, while the Premier, in turn, was increasingly irked by the commission's vigilant control over a government which was essentially non-parliamentary. The coup of August 5 is viewed in some quarters as an attempt to escape from this impasse; in others, it is suggested that the present Metaxas program may be a prelude to permanent dictatorship. The Premier's personality and the course he has pursued since the coup would seem to warrant the second of these assumptions. General Metaxas does not belong to either of the types that have dominated Greek politics during the last twenty years. He is neither a parliamentarian like Venizelos, Gounaris and Tsaldaris, nor a fighting general like Plastiras and Kondylis. He first came into prominence as a brilliant General Staff officer during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913); and his political activities have been guided by shrewd opportunism and accurate calculation. Though one of King Constantine's closest military advisers during the World War, he disapproved of the post-war campaign in Anatolia, disassociated himself from it and thus escaped its disastrous consequences. After his presumably monarchist attempt against the Plastiras dictatorship in 1923 had been put down by the then Republican Kondylis, he turned to parliamentary politics. But while he made a creditable record as

45. That the Military League accurately reflected a widespread popular demand for radical change was demonstrated by the repeated electoral triumphs of Venizelos, who was Prime Minister from 1910 to 1915 and would doubtless have continued in office but for his conflict with the King over war policy.

46. Debate in the Chamber of Deputies (April 24, 1936) on a vote of censure against Sophoulis, *Eleftheron Vima*, April 25, 1936. Debate in parliamentary commission (June 5, 24, 1936), *ibid.*, June 6, 25, 1936. Sophoulis-Metaxas correspondence, *ibid.*, June 24, 1936.

47. For debate between MM. Sophianopoulos and Papanastassiou on this issue, cf. *Eleftheron Vima*, May 24, 29, 1936.

Minister of Communications in the Zaïmis coalition government, he displayed neither the gifts nor the temperament of a democratic and parliamentary leader. Caught between the Populists and the Venizelists, he was unable to build a strong party; and after his defeat in the Venizelist landslide of August 19, 1928, he retired from politics and did not re-emerge until the general election of March 5, 1933. Following the suppression of the revolt of March 1, 1935, he was supplanted by Kondylis in the leadership of the extreme restorationists and seemed condemned to a secondary rôle as the leader of a small parliamentary group. But the depletion of the political ranks caused by the successive deaths of Kondylis, Venizelos, Demerdjis and Tsaldaris, combined with the King's favor, helped to elevate him to the Premiership.

It is clear that Premier Metaxas' temperament, military training and disillusioning experience with parliamentary politics predispose him towards authoritarian government. Even before the coup of August 5, his attitude on the question of restoration of civil liberty and the policies of Colonel Skylakakis, his Minister of the Interior, left much to be desired.<sup>47a</sup> He has included in his cabinet, as Minister of Finance and Vice-Premier, M. Constantine Zavitsanos, a veteran but disgruntled parliamentarian who has made no secret of his preference for dictatorial rule. The closing of party headquarters, the imposition of press censorship, above all the government's paternalism—its reiterated professions of solicitude for the masses and the offer of economic security in exchange for liberty and self-government—these and other palpable imitations of the Fascist and Nazi dictatorships should leave little doubt about the Premier's intentions. It is evident that the coup of August 5 has ushered in a new period of conflict along lines quite different from those of the last twenty years. This struggle between democracy and reaction, which seems imminent in Greece, does not impinge immediately upon the monarchy. Its position will be seriously affected only if the King, having acquiesced in Premier Metaxas' coup, allows himself to become permanently identified with the dictatorship it was designed to establish.

## II. REALIGNMENT OF GREEK FOREIGN POLICY

If it is true that the degree of independence enjoyed by a given nation is determined in the main

by its size, its material resources, its geographical location and certain traditional beliefs and attitudes which are the residue of its historical development, the independence achieved by Greece in 1830 was largely nominal. For about one hundred years the Greek people have believed that the *raison d'être* of independent Greece was not the welfare of its citizens, but the liberation from alien rule of the much larger Greek irredenta beyond its borders. This conviction, which was rooted in three thousand years of Greek history, was largely responsible for a foreign policy quite beyond the resources of the country. An ambitious program of cultural penetration and territorial annexations was undertaken, in the face of Turkish resistance, European antagonism and rival Balkan nationalisms, by a state whose territorial exiguity, lack of economic self-sufficiency and exposed geographical location made it more easily amenable to coercion than any other country in Europe. This disparity between aims and resources made for such a high degree of dependence on international developments that for a century the course of Greek politics has been determined more by the exigencies of foreign policy than by the correlation and clash of social forces within the nation.

This generalization applies particularly to the antecedents of the Republic, since, as has been pointed out, the movement for the abolition of the monarchy originated in a conflict over foreign policy and triumphed as a result of military defeat. On the other hand, the contribution of foreign policy to the restoration of the monarchy was much less decisive. Though the restoration synchronized with the Anglo-Italian conflict over Ethiopia, there was no pro-British or pro-Italian party in Greece, and the pattern of 1915-1920, when the Venizelists and potential Republicans were pro-Ally and the royalists pro-German, was not repeated in 1935-1936. While the assumption is warranted that the restoration was favored by Britain both for dynastic reasons and because a united Greece was needed on the anti-Italian front, it is difficult to determine to what extent British wishes in the matter influenced Greek opinion. All that can be said with any certainty is that the longing for national unity in the midst of a perilous international situation must have contributed to the restoration of the monarchy; and that its consolidation was due in some measure to the feeling of security engendered by the reconciliation of the King with the nation's foremost statesman and diplomat.

An explanation of the relatively insignificant part played, for almost the first time since 1830, by

47a. Cf. memorandum of the "League for the Defence of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen," signed by eminent representatives of all classes. *Eleftheron Vima*, July 31, 1936.

international factors in a major political change may be found in the radical reorientation of Greek foreign policy under the Republic—a reorientation made possible by the fact that the Greek state has at last become more important than the Greek nation beyond its borders. Two factors have contributed most decisively to this change: the defeat of 1922 and its consequences—the end of the century-old policy of irredentist aggrandizement and the deportation of the Greek subjects of Turkey to Greece; and the economic decline of the Greeks of the dispersion or the gradual loss of their sense of kinship with the mother country, due to such post-war developments as the Russian Revolution, the growth of Egyptian nationalism and the stoppage of immigration to America.<sup>48</sup> Thus, because Greece, after a decade of war and diplomacy (1912-1922), has gathered the bulk of the Greek people within its borders, the security of the state, rather than the liberation of the “unredeemed” part of the nation, has now become the major objective of its foreign policy.

The shift of objective from aggression and aggrandizement to defense and security has enabled Greece to rid itself of its dependence on the great powers at precisely the time when the Greek people became disillusioned both with regard to the benevolence of their intentions and the efficacy of their support. For a hundred years attachment to a given great power or group of powers had been a cardinal maxim of Greek foreign policy. The “Russian,” the “British” and the “French” parties which flourished during the reign of Otho were succeeded by the dynastic diplomacy of George I, who was expected to use his family connections for the furtherance of the national interests. This tradition, which culminated in the passionate pro-Ally and pro-German partisanship of the World War, was practically killed by such post-war developments as the desertion of Greece by the Allies, the successful defiance of the Allies by Turkey, the fluidity of the post-war international alignments and the growing assertiveness of the smaller states made possible by regional combinations and the League of Nations.

The new foreign policy, which has been built on these foundations of fact and national psychology, is therefore guided by the following principles:

1. Opposition to revisionism, which means respect for the territorial *status quo*, whether established by victory (Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria) or by defeat (Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey).

48. For a discussion of this aspect of the post-war international position of Greece, cf. A. J. Toynbee, “The East After Lausanne,” *Foreign Affairs*, September 15, 1923.

2. Organization of security on a strictly regional basis, and consequent refusal to become entangled in the conflicts of the great powers or to be drawn into any commitments beyond the Balkan Peninsula and the Mediterranean, except those arising from membership in the League of Nations.

#### FACTS WITH RUMANIA, ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA

These principles, which were implicit in the legacy of Lausanne, emerged clearly during the reconstruction of Greek foreign policy begun by the Zaïmis coalition government, in which M. A. Mihalocopoulos served as Foreign Minister. The first and relatively the easiest step was the Greco-Rumanian treaty on non-aggression and arbitration of March 12, 1928.<sup>49</sup> The next step—rapprochement with Italy—was considerably more difficult because of Italian hostility during the Peace Conference and the Anatolian War, the Corfu incident and, above all, the continued occupation of the Dodecanese by Italy.<sup>50</sup> The Greco-Italian treaty of “friendship, conciliation and judicial settlement,” which was signed in Rome on September 23, 1928, made no mention of the Dodecanese question;<sup>51</sup> and the significance of this silence was underscored by M. Venizelos’ statement that no “Dodecanese question existed between Italy and Greece and the Italian administration of the islands could not and should not prevent the establishment of cordial relations between the two countries.”<sup>52</sup>

This deliberate disassociation of Greece from the interests of a Greek irredenta was dictated by considerations of security which had special relevance to Greco-Yugoslav relations. The Greco-Serb treaty of alliance of 1913 had been denounced by the Yugoslav government on November 15, 1924, and replaced by a new treaty of friendship negotiated by General Pangalos and signed on August 17, 1926. This treaty, which was accompanied by a series of technical agreements regulating the status of a free zone for Yugoslav commerce in Salonica, was still-born. After the overthrow of General Pangalos a press campaign was launched against the new concessions made to Yugoslavia, particularly Yugoslav participation in the administration of the Salonica-Ghevgheli railroad; and on August

49. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Documents on International Affairs, 1928* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 113.

50. For a discussion of the Dodecanese question, cf. A. J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1924*, pp. 470-71.

51. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Documents on International Affairs, 1928*, cited, pp. 119, 148.

52. A. J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1928*, p. 160.

25, 1927 the Greek Chamber unanimously refused to ratify the treaty on the ground that the technical agreements attached to it conferred privileges on Yugoslavia which constituted a threat to Greek sovereignty in Macedonia.<sup>53</sup>

Although negotiations for a new settlement were immediately resumed, little progress was made until M. Venizelos resumed office. The Greco-Italian pact, which increased the Yugoslav government's fear of isolation, gave him the necessary leverage in the negotiations; and on October 11, 1928, in the course of a visit to Belgrade, he induced the Yugoslav government to accept the agreements of 1923, which created the Free Zone, as the basis of negotiation for its new status. This agreement was elaborated in six protocols signed in Geneva on March 17, 1929, which made generous provision for the operation of a Free Zone but limited its use to merchandise in transit to and from Yugoslavia and were silent on the Yugoslav claim to a share in the administration of the Salonica-Ghevgheli railroad. The removal of this important issue enabled the two governments to sign in Belgrade on March 27, 1929 a pact of friendship, conciliation and judicial settlement.<sup>54</sup>

#### RECONCILIATION WITH TURKEY

There was a basic similarity in the international situation of Greece and Turkey after Lausanne which made for the eventual rapprochement of the two countries, despite their secular enmity. They were the only belligerents who, having fought on opposite sides in the World War, engaged in a second war over the enforcement of the Peace Treaty and experienced during this long struggle both victory and defeat. Defeated in 1918, Turkey was victorious in 1922, and was able to dictate at Lausanne a revision of the Treaty of Sèvres which deprived Greece of most of the fruits of its previous victory. The political and territorial upshot of the Lausanne settlement was that it made both countries national states by legalizing the deportation of the Greek irredenta from Turkey to Greece, and transplanting a Moslem population about one-fourth as large from Greece to Turkey.<sup>55</sup> The liquidation of property and other problems connected with the exchange of populations, which had occupied the two governments for many years, were

vigorously pushed by M. Venizelos.<sup>56</sup> Born in Crete when it was still a Turkish province, he had served Greek irredentism more effectively than any other Greek statesman. He now took stock of the new situation and initiated a reorientation of Greek foreign policy based on abandonment of irredentism, acceptance of the Lausanne settlement and reconciliation with Turkey. At considerable risk to his popularity, particularly among the refugee element, he undertook a vigorous campaign of re-education, and when the negotiations which had been pending between the two governments had been completed, he visited Angora, accompanied by M. Mihalacopoulos, the Foreign Minister, and signed, on October 30, 1930, a Greco-Turkish treaty of neutrality, conciliation, arbitration and friendship, a naval protocol providing for the exchange of information concerning the naval armaments of the two countries, and a convention settling the questions connected with the exchange of populations.<sup>57</sup> Greco-Turkish friendship was cultivated with great assiduity during the next two years.<sup>58</sup> The pact of "friendship, understanding and cordial collaboration," signed in the course of M. Tsaldaris' visit to Angora in September 1933, contained elements of a common foreign policy. By the terms of this pact, the signatories guaranteed "the inviolability of their common frontiers," agreed to consult one another on all international questions affecting their interests, and laid down the principle that at international conferences with limited representation the delegate of whichever of the two countries was represented should consider it his mission to defend the interests of both.<sup>59</sup>

#### GREEK COMMITMENTS UNDER BALKAN PACT

The most important aim of this common policy was the consolidation of the Balkan *status quo* through a regional pact of non-aggression. But the efforts of Turkish, Yugoslav and Rumanian diplomacy in that direction were defeated by Bulgaria's refusal to join a pact for the guarantee of frontiers which would mean definitive renunciation of its revisionist aspirations.<sup>60</sup> The pact was

56. For the most exhaustive treatment of the subject, cf. Stephen P. Ladas, *Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey* (New York, Macmillan, 1932).

57. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Survey of International Affairs, 1930*, p. 157. For text, cf. *L'Europe Nouvelle*, December 12, 1930.

58. Venizelos' visit was returned by Premier Ismet Pasha and Foreign Minister Tevfik Rushdi Bey, who in the course of their stay in Athens (October 3-7, 1931) signed five new agreements.

59. For text, cf. *L'Europe Nouvelle*, October 14, 1933.

60. A. J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1934*, pp. 521-25.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

54. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Documents on International Affairs, 1929*, p. 321. For text of Greco-Yugoslav treaty, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 130-38.

55. The homogeneity of the population of Greece was further increased by the reciprocal emigration of the Greco-Bulgarian minorities carried out in accordance with the convention signed at Neuilly on November 27, 1919.

therefore limited to the satisfied and anti-revisionist states which had already concluded a series of bilateral treaties of non-aggression<sup>61</sup> and were not averse to supplementing them with a regional collective guarantee. The approval of the British, French and Italian governments having been obtained in the course of a tour of the capitals by M. D. Maximos, Greek Foreign Minister, the pact was initialed in Belgrade on February 4, 1934 and signed in Athens on February 9, 1934. The four signatories declared in the preamble that their aim was "to contribute to the consolidation of peace in the Balkans." They therefore guaranteed mutually "the security of all their Balkan frontiers" and undertook "not to embark on any political action . . . nor to assume any political obligation toward any other Balkan state without the consent of the other High Contracting Parties."<sup>62</sup> These commitments were clarified by a secret protocol which adopted the definition of aggression formulated by Article 2 of the London Convention of July 3, 1933,<sup>63</sup> declared that the pact was not directed at any power, its aim being "to guarantee the security of the Balkan frontiers against aggression on the part of a Balkan state," but added that "if one of the High Contracting Parties is the victim of aggression on the part of a non-Balkan Power, and if a Balkan state joins in this aggression, simultaneously or subsequently, the Pact of Balkan Understanding will operate in full effect against the Balkan state."<sup>64</sup>

A vigorous campaign against the far-reaching implications of this commitment was undertaken by the Opposition and particularly by M. Venizelos, who proceeded to abjure his past with regard to

this aspect of Greek foreign policy as completely as he had done by his advocacy of reconciliation with Turkey. The statesman who had favored during the World War a broad construction of the Greco-Serb treaty of alliance, and unconditional adherence to one of the belligerent groups, now warned against the dangers of entanglement in the disputes of the great powers and insisted on limiting the obligations of Greece under the pact in order to preclude the eventuality of war with Italy in defense of Yugoslavia. He placed the government in a difficult position by pointing out that the pact had already been limited in another direction through Rumania's renunciation of all claims to Turkish assistance in the event of war with Russia,<sup>65</sup> and he demanded a similar reservation for the benefit of Greece. This demand was met by M. Maximos, the Foreign Minister, in the course of the debate on the ratification of the pact. Replying to M. Papanastassiou, he declared that the aim of the pact was "merely to guarantee the security of the inter-Balkan frontiers against attack by any Balkan Power" and that "consequently Greece cannot in any case, while carrying out the obligations assumed under the Pact, become involved in war against any of the Great Powers."<sup>66</sup> A reservation couched in these terms having been accepted by all the political parties, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate ratified the pact by overwhelming majorities.<sup>67</sup>

The issue, which had already become tainted with partisanship, was reopened early in 1936 by M. Venizelos' charges that M. Maximos had signed in Geneva in June 1934 a secret minute to the effect that the statements made in the Greek Chamber "did not in any way modify the scope of article 3 of the Protocol" and that, therefore, "the Balkan Pact preserved its full validity."<sup>68</sup> The violent controversy which followed convinced the government and public opinion of the need of reaffirming the attitude of Greece under the pact and securing its acceptance by the other signatories. This task was undertaken and successfully carried out by Premier Metaxas at the Balkan Conference, which met in Belgrade from May 4 to May 6, 1936.<sup>69</sup>

61. Besides the treaties concluded by Greece with Rumania, Yugoslavia and Turkey, there was the Turco-Yugoslav treaty of November 27, 1933 and the Turco-Rumanian treaty of October 17, 1933.

62. *Current History*, April 1934, p. 108.

63. This convention, concluded by the U.S.S.R. with Afghanistan, Estonia, Latvia, Persia, Poland, Rumania and Turkey, adopted the Politis report of May 24, 1933 to the Disarmament Conference, which proposed that the designation of aggressor be applied to any state that should (1) declare war against another state, (2) invade the territory of another state even without declaration of war, (3) attack "by its land, sea or air forces, with or without declaration of war, territory, ships or airships of another state," (4) blockade the coasts or the ports of another state and (5) give support within its borders to armed bands invading the territory of another state or refuse "despite the demand of the invaded state, to take all measures within its power to deprive these bands of all aid and protection." It was this last part of the definition of an aggressor state that was objected to most strenuously by Bulgaria and strengthened its determination not to join the Balkan pact. For full text of the London Convention of July 3, 1933, cf. *L'Europe Nouvelle*, July 29, 1933.

64. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Documents on International Affairs*, 1934, p. 300.

65. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, 1934, cited, p. 528.

66. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Documents on International Affairs*, 1934, cited, p. 301; *Current History*, May 1934.

67. *Eleftheron Vima*, March 14, 15, 16; April 1, 2, 1934.

68. *Ibid.*, March 11, 1936.

69. *The Times*, May 7, 1936; *Eleftheron Vima*, May 5-8, 1936; *Bulletin Périodique de la presse grecque*, No. 165 (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Athens), April 28-July 4, 1936, pp. 6, 7.

## THE ETHIOPIAN CRISIS AND GREECE

During the Ethiopian crisis Greece was called upon not only to join the other members of the League in imposing economic sanctions on Italy, but to cooperate with the Mediterranean powers in resisting Italian aggression which might conceivably be provoked by the League's punitive action. Greek policy at this juncture was dictated by adherence to the principle of collective security, and at the same time by a realistic appraisal of national self-interest. The reluctance of Greece to be drawn into war against the overwhelming sea power of Italy in defense of a navally weak country like Yugoslavia did not extend to the totally different case of an Italo-British struggle for mastery in the Mediterranean. As a Mediterranean power, Greece was vitally concerned in such a struggle; and since a policy of neutrality was inconceivable, Greece naturally gravitated toward Great Britain, which presumably was still more powerful than Italy, had been traditionally friendlier and might be counted on, in case of victory, to reward Greek support with the cession of the Dodecanese or even of Cyprus. Hence, in reply to inquiries by the British government, which were also addressed to France, Turkey and Yugoslavia, the Greek government declared that "in full agreement with the other members of the Balkan Entente . . . it would loyally fulfill the undertakings it had assumed under the Covenant, in particular those arising from the measures taken in application of Article XVI." At the same time, it pointed out to the Italian government that "the existence of a treaty of friendship between Greece and Italy did not relieve Greece of the obligation, explicitly reserved in the treaty in question, to fulfill undertakings arising under the Covenant of the League of Nations."<sup>70</sup>

That cooperation with the League did not involve any departure from a strictly regional foreign policy was made clear by the Greek government during the crisis precipitated two months later by Germany's reoccupation of the Rhineland. At the close of a meeting of Little Entente and Balkan Entente diplomats, which was called in Geneva by M. Titulescu, the Rumanian Foreign Minister, a communiqué was issued by the Havas Agency expressing "unanimous and unqualified approval of the stand taken by France and Belgium toward the repudiation of the Treaty of Locarno by the German Government" and proclaiming the readiness of the two Ententes to enforce respect for all the post-war treaties, including Locarno.<sup>71</sup>

70. Great Britain, *Documents Relating to the Dispute between Ethiopia and Italy*, Ethiopia No. 2 (1936) (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1936), Cmd. 5072.

The inference that Greece was as deeply concerned over the violation of Locarno as Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Rumania, and as determined to defend all post-war treaties as those nearer home was so disturbing that the Greek government hastened to make clear that the Greek representative had been present at the Geneva meeting in an unofficial capacity and had not been instructed to participate in any declaration of policy.<sup>72</sup>

The insistence of Greece on the strict interpretation of the Balkan pact has undoubtedly diminished its value for its two other signatories, which have extra-Balkan interests. Yugoslavia conceived the pact originally as a defense against Italy, as well as an inducement to Bulgaria to renounce revisionism and withdraw from the orbit of Italian influence. Rumania, on the other hand, while eager to insure its Balkan frontiers, has regarded the pact essentially as a reinforcement of the Little Entente and an additional safeguard of the territorial *status quo* in Central Europe. But as it stands at present, the pact is merely an instrument of defense against Bulgaria and Albania—the two Balkan non-signatories—so long as they are not helped by an extra-Balkan power.<sup>73</sup> The failure to extend the anti-revisionist scope of the pact is conceivably as important a factor as German economic penetration in Central Europe and the Balkans and the recent victories of Italian and German diplomacy in the disintegration of the general anti-revisionist front which is now in progress.

At the same time, despite its steadfast refusal to join the Central-European anti-revisionist bloc, the strengthening of Greco-German economic relations and the pro-German and pro-Nazi tendencies of Premier Metaxas, it would be a mistake to regard Greece as a potential satellite of Germany. Assuming that the personal factor is of decisive importance in foreign policy, the King's British sympathies may prove a sufficient counterweight to the pro-Germanism of his Premier. Moreover, the position of Greece among the contending powers of Europe will probably be influenced quite as potently by the multifarious traditional ties that bind the Greek people to the Western democracies. But in the last analysis, its choice will be determined by the compelling fact that, as a small Mediterranean country, it cannot afford to range itself against the power or group of powers able to maintain mastery in that region by means of maritime supremacy.

71. *Eleftheron Vima*, March 13, 1936.

72. *Ibid.*, March 13, 1936.

73. Its efficacy in this respect was demonstrated during the March 1935 revolt when the northern frontier of Greece, though practically undefended, remained inviolate.